

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 03990 130912Z
ACTION EA-12

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJ: LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS: SALONGA COMMENTS ON AQUINO'S
TV PERFORMANCE AND ON THE LABAN CAMPAIGN AND PROSPECTS

1. SUMMARY. FORMER SENATOR SALONGA IS PLEASED WITH
AQUINO'S TV PERFORMANCE AND THINKS IT WON HIM MANY
VOTES. SALONGA NOTES THAT MARCOS AUTHORIZED THE TV SHOW
AFTER A MALACANANG POLL SHOWED A GROWING
PUBLIC SYMPATHY FOR AQUINO OVER THE FACT THAT HE HAD
NOT BEEN PERMITTED TO RESPOND TO ENRILE'S CHARGES
CONCERNING ALLEGED CIA AND COMMUNIST CONNECTIONS.
SALONGA BELIEVES THAT THE GOP IS DWELLING ON THE AQUINO-
CIA THEME IN AN EFFORT TO DISCREDIT AQUINO WITH STUDENTS
AND YOUTH AMONG WHOM HE IS VERY POPULAR. SALONGA REMAINS
PESSIMISTIC ABOUT LABAN'S ELECTORAL PROSPECTS IN METRO
MANILA. WHILE HE BELIEVES LABAN COULD WIN SEVERAL SEATS
IN AN HONEST ELECTION, HE IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE RESULTS
WILL NOT BE MANIPULATED. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS MARCH 11 SALONGA SEEMED
QUITE PLEASED WITH AQUINO'S TV PERFORMANCE THE PREVIOUS
EVENING. "THAT INTERVIEW GOT NINOY A LOT OF VOTES,"
HE SAID. COMMENT: FILIPINOS WE HAVE TALKED TO OVER
THE WEEKEND GENERALLY SHARE THE VIEW THAT THE AQUINO
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PERFORMANCE WAS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE. END COMMENT.
CITING AQUINO'S SISTER LUPITA CONCIO WHO WAS PRESENT
DURING THE TV TAPING AT FORT BONIFACIO, SALONGA CONFIRMED
THAT THE TAPE WAS NOT EDITED. HE COMPLAINED MILDLY
HOWEVER THAT THE NOISE OF AIRCRAFT FROM NEARLY MANILA
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT DROWNED OUT THE AUDIO ON SEVERAL
OCCASIONS. SALONGA NOTED THAT AQUINO HAD INTENTIONALLY

ADOPTED A RELATIVELY MODERATE POSTURE ("HE IS NORMALLY MORE COMBATIVE") IN ORDER NOT TO JEOPARDIZE HIS CHANCES FOR FUTURE ACCESS TO THE MEDIA. SALONGA HOPED THAT AQUINO WOULD BE ABLE TO APPEAR ON TV AGAIN DURING THE CAMPAIGN BUT DID NOT SEEM TOO SANGUINE ABOUT THIS. HE ADDED THAT MARCOS HAD AGREED TO AQUINO'S "FACE THE NATION" APPEARANCE AFTER A MALACANANG POLL SHOWED A PUBLIC BACKLASH BUILDING UP OVER THE FACT THAT AQUINO HAD NOT BEEN PERMITTED TO RESPOND TO ENRILE'S CHANGES CONCERNING ALLEGED CIA AND COMMUNIST CONNECTIONS. SALONGA OPINED THAT IN SURFACING THESE ALLEGATIONS OF AN AQUINO-CIA CONNECTION THE GOP WAS SEEKING TO DISCREDIT AQUINO IN THE EYES OF STUDENTS AND YOUTH AMONG WHOM NINOY HAS A STRONG FOLLOWING.

3. SALONGA COMMENTED THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE LABAN CAMPAIGNER (NEXT TO AQUINO) THUS FAR IS AQUINO'S SEVEN-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER KRIS WHO HAS APPEARED SEVERAL TIMES ON BEHALF OF HER FATHER. WE HAVE HEARD FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT THE KBL IS BECOMING RESTIVE ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF KRIS IN THE CAMPAIGN. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFFS' QUESTION, SALONGA SAID THAT, AFTER AQUINO, THE BEST LABAN BET IS FORMER CONGRESSMAN (REPRESENTING 1ST DISTRICT, RIZAL) NEPTALI GONZALES WHO HAS A SUBSTANTIAL CONSTITUENCY IN THE METRO AREA. OVERALL, SALONGA WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT LABAN'S ELECTORAL

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PROSPECTS. WITHOUT BLOC VOTING AND WITH A FREE MEDIA, SALONGA ASSERTED THAT LABAN WOULD SWEEP ALL THE METRO SEATS. IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, HOWEVER, HE THOUGHT LABAN MIGHT WIN UP TO SEVEN SEATS IF THE POLLING WERE REASONABLY HONEST. BUT HE WAS NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT THAT THE RESULTS WOULD NOT BE RIGGED.

4. SALONGA CONFIRMED THAT THE RECENTLY BEGUN OPPOSITIONIST NEWSPAPER, LAMLAYANG PILIPINAS (MANILA 3696) HAS NOT BEEN APPROVED BY THE AUTHORITIES BUT ADDED THAT THUS FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO GOP EFFORT TO OBSTRUCT PRINTING OR DISTRIBUTION. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE TONE OF THE PAPER HAD BEEN KEPT FAIRLY MODERATE SO AS NOT TO STIMULATE A GOP REACTION. HE SAID THAT 20,000 COPIES OF THE FIRST EDITION HAD BEEN PRINTED AND THESE HAD BEEN QUICKLY SOLD THROUGH A SPECIAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM SET UP TO FORESTALL GOP PURCHASES OF THE PAPER. THE SECOND EDITION, WITH A RUN OF 30,000, WILL APPEAR THIS WEEK AND WILL INCLUDE MATERIAL FROM THE AQUINO TV INTERVIEW. SALONGA INDICATED THAT MANY MORE COPIES COULD BE SOLD BUT THAT LABAN'S FINANCES FOR THIS ENTERPRISE WERE LIMITED.

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